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GOVERNOR KATHY HOCHUL

**GOVERNOR HOCHUL ANNOUNCES TEMPLE PARK WILL REOPEN AFTER
COMPREHENSIVE SOIL TESTING REVEALS PARK IS SAFE FOR PUBLIC USE**

***Following Recent Reports, State Agencies Tested for Lead Levels in Park Soil and Found
it Meets Federal and State Safety Standards***

***Departments of Health, Environmental Conservation, and Public Service Assess
Additional Sites and Next Steps***

***State Continues Collecting Telecommunications Companies' Inventory Reports of Lead-
Containing Cables***

Governor Kathy Hochul today announced that Temple Park in Wappingers Falls is safe to reopen after soil analysis shows lead levels meet state and federal safety standards for children's play areas. The park was temporarily closed out of an abundance of caution due to media reports that suggested there were elevated lead levels in the soil originating from old overhead lead-containing cables left by telecommunications companies. The State's scientific analysis found no evidence of elevated or widespread lead contamination in the area sampled. The multi-agency examination of the potential for lead-based telecommunication cables in New York State communities is ongoing.

"My administration will always take swift action to ensure our communities are safe with reports of potential public health threats," **Governor Hochul said**. "I am pleased to announce that we have confirmed Temple Park is safe for public use and we will continue our statewide investigation to ensure the continued health and safety of our communities."

In its [final report](#), DOH's soil sampling investigation found no evidence of elevated or widespread lead contamination in the sampled area, and the results suggest there is no evidence of significant exposure or public health risk for those utilizing the park. DOH and DEC are coordinating with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and have advised the Village of Wappingers Falls to reopen the park.

New York State Health Commissioner Dr. James McDonald said, "Thanks to the swift action of experts at the Department of Health, the Department of Environmental Conservation, and the Dutchess County Department of Behavioral and Community Health, we are pleased to report that Temple Park in Wappingers Falls is safe for public use. We are continuing our

review throughout the state to determine whether there are other areas for concern, and if so, will take immediate action to ensure the health of all New Yorkers is protected.”

New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Commissioner Basil Seggos said, “In response to reports of historic lead cables at Temple Park, New York State agencies partnered with Dutchess County and the Village of Wappingers Falls to quickly advance a comprehensive sampling plan. The results of the State’s sampling should give parents and Wappingers Falls residents peace of mind that park visitors are safe from lead exposure. DEC continues to work closely with the Departments of Health and Public Service, and local partners to fully assess potential risks from lead cables and take necessary actions to protect communities and the environment.”

New York State Department of Public Services CEO Rory M. Christian said, “Public safety is a core mandate to the Commission and I am proud of the speed with which the state agencies and county partners conducted the requisite testing to meet that mandate and ease community concerns. We will continue to work with our partners to take necessary actions to protect communities and the environment.”

Lead naturally occurs in soils, and typical lead soil levels range from 50 to 400 parts per million (ppm). In addition, lead can be found in paint in older homes, dust, air, water, soil, and in some products used in and around our homes. Lead-based paint in pre-1980 homes is the leading contributor to elevated blood lead levels in children. The acceptable limit for children’s play areas, per EPA soil guidance levels, is set at a maximum of 400 ppm. All but one sample collected by DEC and DOH at Temple Park and nearby areas contained lead below this range. The sole exceedance, at 410 ppm, was located along the roadway and outside of play areas and does not present an exposure concern to children or the general public.

Twenty-five discrete soil samples were taken from and alongside Temple Park, which were then sent to New York State’s world-renowned Wadsworth Center for flame atomic absorption spectrophotometry analysis using EPA method 7000B. Field efforts referenced in recent media reports utilized a field instrument, which is a hand-held tool called an XRF machine, to conduct an on-site screening for lead at the park. This tool is useful for screening purposes; however, results should be confirmed with more accurate laboratory analysis of soil samples. New York State requested and has not been provided any data or laboratory analysis performed as part of recent media reports.

On July 20, 2023, [Governor Hochul announced](#) New York State is reviewing additional locations of historic lead-containing cables for potential concern. DOH, DEC, and DPS ordered the State’s 246 facilities-based telecommunication providers to compile an inventory of the presence of aerial and buried cables, both on land and below water, containing lead across New York. Within the next few weeks, telecommunications companies must provide a full inventory of lead-containing aerial and buried cable owned by the company for both cable still in use to provide service and cable that is no longer being used but has yet to be removed.

DOH, DEC, and DPS will use this information to evaluate the need for additional steps, including identifying any sensitive locations to prioritize for further investigation, and will keep communities informed as these efforts advance.

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